

**COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**  
**– DIRECTORATE E –**  
**Horizontal Policies and Networks**



**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ASSESSMENT ON TERRITORIAL IMPACTS**

**Submitted by Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)**

**Michael Schneider** is the rapporteur for the CoR own initiative opinion on *Assessment on territorial impacts*. This opinion will discuss the European Commission's Staff Working Document on **Assessing territorial impacts: operational guidance on how to assess regional and local impacts within the Commission Impact Assessment system, SWD(2013) 3 final**. This questionnaire identifies important issues for the Committee of the Regions and is designed to assist in the drafting of the own initiative opinion on the assessment of territorial impacts.

Please complete and submit by **20 March 2013**. If you are member of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network you can upload the completed questionnaire directly onto the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network website (<http://subsidiarity.cor.europa.eu> – remember to log in). Alternatively and in case you are not member of the Network, you can send it by email to [subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu](mailto:subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu).

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## QUESTIONS

1. The Staff Working Document states that: *"the guidance provided here also responds to a request from the Member States, expressed in the debate following the 2008 Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and under the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 as part of the Territorial Agenda process"*.

**a) Do you consider that the document published by the European Commission meets the expectations and the ideas expressed in the political debate raised after the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion in 2008? Do you believe there is a need for greater follow-up to this debate on territorial cohesion and if yes, could you give some concrete examples?**

The document on the "Assessment on territorial impacts" published by the European Commission reflects the views on territorial cohesion expressed in the debate following the publication of the Green Paper on territorial cohesion in 2008 and elsewhere. Working towards strategic management taking into account spatial aspects is increasingly seen as an approach enabling more effective management, not just of regions.

One of the suggestions which could be implemented at regional level is the drawing up of strategic documents taking into account territorial aspects. In its updated 2020 Development Strategy, the Lodz Region has presented a cross-cutting political approach targeted at all regional stakeholders, covering the three main pillars: economic cohesion, social cohesion and spatial cohesion. In addition, in order to achieve greater synergy, this approach is flanked by a territorial and functional policy implemented in urban and rural areas as well as in specialised functional areas.

2. In order to better coordinate the territorial impact of sectoral EU policies, there needs to be a better understanding and measurement of those impacts. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion already focused on this point, stating that "improving territorial cohesion implies better coordination between sectoral and territorial policies and improved coherence between territorial interventions".

**b) Do you believe that the European Commission's proposal can be an effective instrument able to improve coordination between EU sectoral policies having territorial impacts? In your view what else should/could be done?**

The European Commission's proposal can be an effective instrument able to improve coordination between EU sectoral policies with territorial impacts. Territorial impact assessment could help to make sectoral policies more efficient and effective, at the same time as helping to reduce imbalances between regions in cases where territorial impacts are very uneven.

3. The Staff Working Document provides operational and methodological guidance on how to answer a range of questions regarding the potential territorial impact of a given proposal. Nevertheless, it underlines that assessing territorial impacts is not mandatory, and states that it is just a tool that can be helpful to enhance the policy coherence of some policy proposals.

**c) Do you consider that territorial impact assessments should be made compulsory for those sectoral policies having a territorial impact? If yes, in your opinion for which sectoral policies should the assessment of territorial impacts be made mandatory?**

Making territorial impact assessments compulsory for sectoral policies affecting local and regional governments makes sense; this could help to ensure more effective implementation of these policies. Such a requirement could be considered for e.g. transport, urban development and agricultural policies.

4. The Staff Working Document states that a territorial impact assessment should be carried out when the proposal explicitly focuses on specific territories or when the proposal risks of having a large asymmetric territorial impact (outlier impact). It also highlights different methods that can be used to assess territorial impacts. In particular, it mentions qualitative and quantitative analysis. These tools and methodologies should be used by the different Directorates-General at the European Commission when preparing territorial impact assessments for proposals they are responsible for.

**d) Do you consider the data, methodology and tools proposed for supporting territorial impact assessments (such as ESPON ARTS<sup>1</sup> or QUICKScan) are sufficient to measure the potential territorial impacts a given proposal could have in your region? Would you propose any other type of tools/methodology?**

**e) Do you believe the complexity of territorial impact assessments require them to be carried out by a single specialised entity (one-stop shop) or do you prefer the idea of a decentralised system as proposed in the Staff Working Document?**

The suggested data, quantitative and qualitative methods and tools (such as ESPON ARTS and QUICKScan) are a useful basis to measure the potential territorial impact of a given proposal on a region, but they do not cover all the options that could be used to carry out a territorial impact assessment. Introducing a standardised system to measure potential territorial impact for all projects might not be feasible due to different specific features from one project to another. One possibility would be a greater emphasis on high-quality studies, e.g. an evaluation which would supplement the entire system with analyses appropriate to the specific nature of the project.

A decentralised territorial impact assessment system, as proposed in the Staff Working Document, would definitely be a more advantageous solution. Carrying out analyses at regional level (taking into account aspects common to all regions) should be an effective tool for defining the goals of regional policy.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/arts.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/arts.html).

5. Multilevel Governance and partnerships are key factors in the implementation of territorial cohesion, focussing on strengthening a place-based approach. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for the assessment of specific territorial impacts and recalls the potential role<sup>2</sup> of the CoR in assisting the European Commission in the process of Impact Assessment as well as to be associated to some of the EC's initiatives towards improvements in the capacity building of regional and local authorities<sup>3</sup>.

**f) What should the specific measures providing for the involvement of local and regional authorities be in these exercises?**

**g) What role do you see for the Committee of the Regions in this context?**

Local and regional authorities should be involved in the consultation process to prepare for territorial impact assessment. The Committee of the Regions should provide expertise and help to shape opinions.

6. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for territorial cohesion to be strengthened in relation to the EU2020 Strategy. One possibility for this could be not to confine the assessment of territorial impacts to legislative proposals and to extend them to other documents, such as key planning documents, such as the Annual Growth Survey.

**h) Do you think there should be a territorial dimension of the EU2020 policy cycle?**

**i) Do you consider the Annual Growth Survey (as a key planning document for the launch of the annual EU2020 policy cycle) should contain a territorial impact assessment?**

**j) In your opinion, should Territorial Impact Assessments also be carried out at Member State level?**

The EU2020 policy cycle should have a territorial dimension. Statistics could be compared to show certain predispositions of Member States and regions, and used to enable effective management and implementation of various aspects of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Annual Growth Survey should contain a territorial impact assessment, and this could be made part of this year's Europe 2020 strategy policy strategy once it is launched. Annual monitoring of economic growth taking into account a territorial impact assessment could constitute a consistent system, with carefully selected indicators comprising a complementary whole. The introduction of analyses including territorial and economic aspects could represent a good example of how strategic management can be combined with spatial planning.

Territorial impact assessments at Member State level would enable more effective implementation of EU policies, while strengthening monitoring systems by adding benchmarking aspects.

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<sup>2</sup> See section 5.5 of the EC's Staff Working Document: "Under the Protocol on Cooperation between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions (2012) the Commission services may ask for support from the Committee in preparing its assessment.

<sup>3</sup> CdR 353/2010, CoR Opinion on Smart Regulation.